

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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Eliminating the Risk of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning in your Home *Public Service Announcement by Commissioner Burack included*

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services wants to remind residents about the dangers of carbon monoxide levels in your homes. Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. As the winter months come upon us, our use of fuel for heating increases, thereby increasing the potential for elevated levels of carbon monoxide.

Nationwide, hundreds of people die accidentally every year from CO poisoning caused by malfunctioning or improperly used fuel-burning furnaces or appliances. According to the state fire marshal's office, several deaths occur in New Hampshire every year. Infants, elderly people, unborn babies, and people with anemia or with a history of heart or respiratory disease can be especially susceptible. Symptoms of CO poisoning may include headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, and confusion. Do not ignore symptoms, particularly if more than one person is feeling them. **If you suspect CO poisoning, get outside to fresh air immediately, and then call 911.**

"Furnaces and appliances that are not working properly or are used incorrectly can produce dangerous levels of CO," noted DES Commissioner Tom Burack. "If these devices are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. We encourage all residents to take steps to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning in their homes."

Techniques to reduce the risk of CO poisoning in your home when using fuel-burning devices include:

- Have a trained professional inspect, clean, and tune-up central heating system (furnaces, flues, and chimneys) annually. Repair any leaks promptly.
- Install CO alarm(s) with battery backup outside of sleeping areas.
- Test your CO alarm(s) frequently and replace dead batteries.
- Do not use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Keep gas appliances properly adjusted.
- Do not use any gasoline-powered engines, such as portable generators, in enclosed spaces.
- Do not idle your vehicle inside garage.
- Do not sleep in any room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater
- Install and use an exhaust fan vented to outdoors over gas stoves.
- Make certain that doors on all wood stoves fit tightly.

For more information about carbon monoxide call DES at (603) 271-3911, visit the DES website at www.des.nh.gov and search keyword “Indoor Air Quality Program,” or visit the US Environmental Protection Agency website at www.epa.gov/iaq/co.html.

60 Second Public Service Announcement from Tom Burack, DES Commissioner:

Audio file available at: <http://des.nh.gov/media/> under Audio/Video/Podcasts

This is Tom Burack, Commissioner of the NH Department of Environmental Services with a message about the dangers of Carbon Monoxide.

Carbon monoxide can kill you without your seeing it, smelling it or tasting it.

Each year in America, carbon monoxide poisoning claims hundreds of lives.

Please take steps to protect your family from these deadly fumes.

Have a trained professional clean and tune-up your heating systems at least once a year.

I strongly urge you to install at least one carbon monoxide detector within your living area, and to vent all fuel burning devices to the outdoors.

Know the warning symptoms of poisoning that include headaches, exhaustion, drowsiness, dizziness, vomiting, and chest pain.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, you should get fresh air immediately and call 911.

For more information, call the Department of Environmental Services at 271-3911.

60 Second Public Service Announcement - Generic:

Did you know that carbon monoxide can kill you without seeing it, smelling it or tasting it.

Each year in America, carbon monoxide poisoning claims hundreds of lives and sends thousands to the hospital.

Please take steps to protect your family from these deadly fumes.

Most heating systems emit carbon monoxide. Have a trained professional clean and tune-up your heating systems at least once a year and never use fuel burning devices that are not vented to the outdoors.

Everyone should install at least one carbon monoxide detector within your living area.

Know the warning symptoms of poisoning that include headaches, exhaustion, drowsiness, dizziness, vomiting, and chest pain.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, you should get to fresh air immediately and call 911.

For more information, call the Department of Environmental Services Indoor Air Quality Program at 271-3911.